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February 12, 1992

Hon Benoît Bouchard
Minister of National Health and Welfare
Room 325
East Block

Dear Mr Bouchard;

On behalf of Canadians who are experiencing mental and physical health problems as a result of environmental sensitivities, I would like to congratulate you and, through you, your Department for the change in attitudes that has evolved over the years and, in particular, for recognizing the seriousness of environmental sensitivities. However, words are not enough. I would like to urge you again to develop and put in place a system for psychiatric screening that will prevent the abuse of the rights of individuals wrongfully incarcerated in mental institutions because they are mis-diagnosed. At the same time, individuals already in custody should be given reviews to determine if their mental illness derives from environmental sensitivities. The Allergy and Environmental Health Association has provided your Department with case histories of individuals who have been treated for the wrong illness because the symptoms they exhibit were mistakenly identified as being linked to a mental rather than physical disorder. There could be many more such people in federal and provincial penal and psychiatric institutions. I would appreciate knowing how quickly your Department will, in cooperation with other jurisdictions and agencies, be able to ensure the proper diagnosis and treatment of individuals suffering from environmental sensitivities.

I thank you.

Sincerely,